

# socialist standard

August 2013  
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Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement



## Fool for your lovin' no more



Wollaston's  
Westminster  
Woes  
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Generals  
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# socialist standard

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The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on **Saturday 7 September** at the address above. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the Editorial Committee.

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# Introducing The Socialist Party

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The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make

new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we

will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

**If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.**



# socialist standard

AUGUST 2013

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## Editorial

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### What can the unions do?

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TRADE UNIONS are organisations of the working class established to improve and defend their pay and conditions of work in capitalism although they are limited in what they can achieve for their members. Unions arise out of the wage-relation that is at the basis of capitalism where the working class are forced to sell their mental and physical energies in order to live. Unions exert collective pressure on employers to prevent their members' wages falling below the value of their labour-power. It is a way of ensuring that they are paid the full value of what they have to sell and can ensure that wages are not reduced below the subsistence level.

Strikes are necessary if the working class are to prevent themselves from being driven into the ground by the never-satisfied demands of profit. The strike is one of the working class weapons that can limit the aims of the capitalist class. We should not deceive ourselves into believing that joining a union or going on strike will free us from exploitation. This does not mean that the working class should sit back and do nothing. Within capitalism the trade union struggle over wages and conditions must go on but the real struggle is to take over the means of wealth production and distribution.

Some on the Left expect unions to act in a revolutionary way with non-revolutionary members but members of the working class who will not vote for socialism will not strike for

it. The National Shop Stewards Network call for a 24-hour General Strike against the present capitalist austerity: 'If the TUC and the Trade Unions named the date for a 24 hour general strike or co-ordinated strike ballots on the pay freeze alone, it would be hugely popular with all those facing these brutal cuts.' It might be popular but would it be effective? In any event, the unions can't overthrow capitalism.

To get socialism requires a class conscious working class democratically capturing state power to prevent that power being used against them. We do not criticise the unions for not being revolutionary, but we do criticise them when they depart from the principle of an antagonism of interests between working class and the capitalist class, when they collaborate with the capitalist class, the state or political parties.

The Socialist Party declares that the working class need to capture the political machine and wrest political supremacy from the capitalist class before they can establish socialism. It is our job as socialists to stand with the working class in their necessary battles to defend themselves but we point out at all times that the real victory to be achieved is the abolition of the wages system. 'Instead of the *conservative* motto: 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword: 'Abolition of the wages system!'

## Analogy Aversion

A RECENT study of social unrest in 170 countries over the last hundred years claims to show that political turbulence shares something in common with other types of organic contagion, like epidemics and forest fires, with key variables determining susceptibility, resistance and transmission (*New Scientist*, 29 June). The model shows that prolonged social stresses create the conditions for an eruption which is then often sparked by some random or even unrelated event.

You can do something similar in your kitchen, of course. If you fill a pan with water, fit a tight lid and then set it to boil, the lid will at some point blow off. Key variables like how high you've got the gas, how tight the lid is, how big the pot is, all affect the experiment.

If this seems logical to you, beware. What the preceding paragraph has done is to argue the validity of one analogy, a 'bio-political' model of contagion, via another analogy, a simple 'thermo-political' model.

Analogies are useful for illustrating the gist of ideas but they are notoriously misleading precisely because superficial similarities can obscure deeper inconsistencies. In short, people tend to get carried with them.

Comparing the 'contagion' of ideas to the contagion of germs is an example of a 'bio-political' analogy. The application of biological analysis to social phenomena has in the past led to the egregious excesses of sociobiology. But the temptation is understandable. Ideas do appear to spread, reproduce, mutate and trigger complex processes, just like germs. We even talk about 'the germ of an idea'. The danger is that people begin to forget that it is an analogy and start thinking it's real. At this point fact stops and fancy takes over.

Something like this has happened with meme 'theory'. The term 'meme' is bandied about willy-nilly these days as a handy – or lazy – shorthand for any cultural element which can be transmitted and mutated. In this view a tune is a meme, especially if you sing it wrong, and socialism is a meme par excellence, considering how many deformed freakish offspring have claimed it as a parent. Meme theory, or memetics, is also a meme where, like socialism, the word itself is sometimes the only thing which survives intact. Richard Dawkins first posited the idea in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, making clear something even his most ardent supporters seem to have forgotten since, that it was not a theory per se but *analogous* to his main argument, that the unit of evolutionary change is not the group or the individual but the gene. The point was to show that genes act as the agents and beneficiaries of change without having any conscious intentionality about it, just the way an idea can sweep through a population if conditions are right, regardless of whether the idea is good or bad for the people holding it. As with many great works, vast confusion was the result. Dawkins later railed at those who only read the title page before criticising, but admitted he may have chosen the wrong title because some people thought he was arguing that there were genes for selfishness, or that genes acted with a selfish 'purpose', or that selfishness (this was during the Thatcher years) was somehow 'a good thing'.

Memetics and the selfish gene are both heartily disliked because they seem to reduce humans to the status of a dumb and brainless 'survival machine' whose sole purpose is to incubate and perpetuate the evolutionary agent. This is intolerably upsetting to some people's ego. Just like pre-Copernican Catholics, we like to think life revolves around us, not that we revolve around life. But this is not the real objection. Whereas the selfish gene argument does offer explanations not available to individual or group-based evolutionary perspectives, the selfish meme proposition as a *theory* is less

useful and convincing. Modern telecommunications is based on the fact that you can quantise, or digitise something which is analogue in nature into discrete parcels or 'quanta'. CD music works this way. But soundwaves are physical phenomena with properties that lend themselves to quantising algorithms, ie. you can easily cut them up into little bits. Can you really do the same thing with thought processes? What would be the properties of a cultural 'bit'? As Dawkins expresses it, there is no limit on what you can call a meme. This means that memes have a property no gene has, namely the ability to nest themselves inside each other like infinite matryoshka dolls. So 'reality' is a meme which contains all other memes. To say that everything is a meme is the same as saying that nothing is, which is meaningless. Maths equations that result in infinity are also meaningless, and quantum theories of gravity – the search for a theory of everything – frequently run into the 'infinity' problem. But here's the difference. A quantum theory of gravity is necessary because without it the universe is largely inexplicable. There's no equivalent and pressing case for a quantum theory of knowledge.

Using memetics to underpin a statistical study of social unrest is therefore a deeply supercilious activity. But this is not to say that statistical studies can't tell you anything useful.

## Loss aversion

Consider the finding by another researcher that 'most protestors worldwide are not the grindingly poor but the newly prosperous'. The argument is that people don't protest against poverty while they're in it, but once they have left it they will protest vigorously against a possible return to it. Thus, food and bus price increases which sparked the recent riots in Brazil can be seen as a manifestation of that well-known phenomenon, loss-aversion.

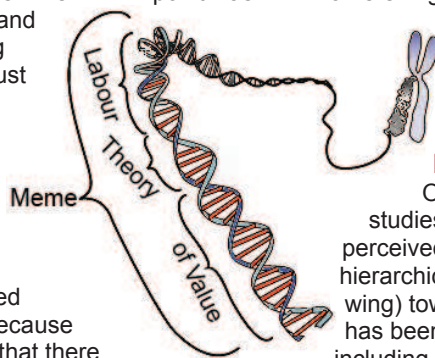
Loss-aversion bias, attested in many studies, states simply that people tend to make more effort to prevent the loss of X than they would expend to attain X in the first place. It's not about what you haven't got, and it's not about what you could get, it's about what you have got that you might lose.

To a socialist there is a clear implication here about how we approach the task of presenting our case. It's uncontroversial to say that through the generations most workers have gained in capitalism. When it comes to contemplating major social change, therefore, the fear of losing these gains overrides every other consideration.

This suggests that what we should focus on is not what workers might gain from socialism so much as what they have gained, but might lose, by continuing to support capitalism. From jobs to houses, food to health to civil rights to the planet itself, there is no shortage of contenders.

## Lenin aversion

One other observation gleaned from academic studies of unrest which may be worth noting is the perceived shift in recent protests away from top-down hierarchical organisation (aka the classical Leninist left-wing) towards leaderless self-organising networks. Much has been written on the 'contagion' of crowd-based action, including recently in this column (*Crowd Atlas*, May issue). But is it true, as one researcher has suggested, that it's not just a question of spontaneous gatherings of the Twitterati but a general evolution away from hierarchies and towards horizontal democratic structures in broader society? Fingers crossed, we can only hope so, because that would mean society is 'mainstreaming' the socialist ethic without any help from us. We've always argued that this could and should happen, but we've been disappointed before. If it is happening, the capitalist elite are not going to like it one bit, and may try to reimpose top-down coercion and wipe out these democratic gains. Still, if the studies are right, that might be the point where workers' famous loss-aversion impulse really comes into its own.



## Divided society

Dear Editors

It's not surprising that so many of the promises on poverty and inequality made by politicians have been broken ('Empty Rhetoric', Voice from the Back, July). The so-called elite who run society don't really care about the rest of us.

Yet, it doesn't have to be like this. There is masses of research to support the idea that we can choose the kind of society we want to live in, and that includes a more equal society free of poverty.

Researchers like Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson published evidence a few years ago. It showed that a very divided society makes our physical and mental health much worse. Inequality makes us ill. There is also less trust between people too. Their book *The Spirit Level* pointed out that everyone suffers in that kind of cruel society.

More recently, David Stuckler and Sanjay Basu published *The Body Economic: Why Austerity Kills*. Once again, the savage decisions made by many governments damaged people's health and well-being. Cutting back on health and welfare increases diseases and creates unhappiness.

We need to create a different future for ourselves.

**Graeme Kemp. Wellington, Shropshire**

**Reply:** Entirely agree. It's good to know that there are others out there who agree with us. *Editors.*

## Childish?

Dear Editors

I thought your article Resistanbul in the July *Socialist Standard* was one of the best, most informative and helpful I have read in a very long time. But did you really have to spoil it on the front cover with a trite and infantile reference to turkeys and stuffing?

Your article was extremely respectful and sensitive to the issues and challenges facing Turkish society and the Turkish people. Your cover was cheap and childish.

**Andrew Northall. Kettering**

### SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2012

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## People not Profits

**Things are not produced today to meet people's needs. They are produced to make a profit. And that's the cause of the problems people in Tulse Hill face.**

Under the profit system profits always come first. Before providing basic services like health care and transport, before improving conditions at work, and before providing decent housing.

It's profits first, people second.

Under the profit system production is in the hands of profit-seeking business enterprises, all competing to maximise the rate of return on the money invested in them. Decisions as to what to produce and how much, and how and where to produce it, are not made in response to people's needs but in response to market forces.

As a result, the health and welfare of the workforce and the effects on the environment take second place. The profit system can't help doing this. It's the only way it can work. Which is why it must go.

I know this is only a local by-election but make no apology for raising this issue. The reduced incomes and cuts to services that people in Tulse Hill are having to put up with are a direct result of the profit system being in an economic crisis. When this happens governments, whatever their political colour, have to cut their spending so as to give profits a chance to recover. As local councils are largely financed by central government this trickles down to the local level too.

So, what's the alternative?

One thing is certain. The Tories, LibDems and Labour—and now UKIP—have nothing to offer. They all support the profit system and are only squabbling over which of them should have a go at running it.

If we are going to improve things we are going to have to act for ourselves, without professional politicians or leaders of any kind. We are going to have to organise ourselves democratically to bring about a society geared to serving human needs not profits.

Production to satisfy people's needs. That's the alternative. But this can only be done if we control production and the only basis for this is common ownership and democratic control.

I have been put forward by the Socialist Party as a name on the ballot paper you can put an X against to register your rejection of the profit system and your agreement with the alternative.

**Election statement for the local Lambeth council by-election in Tulse Hill ward, London, 25 July 2013**

"I've been teaching for 30 years, and I find this to be one of the best short films I have ever used" **DOUG BROWN, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS, NORTH ARIZONA UNIVERSITY**

*Capitalism and Other Kids' Stuff* is a short film from The Socialist Party which questions some of the most basic assumptions about life in capitalism.

For a copy, complete the order form on page 7



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For further information about about The Socialist Party of Great Britain, return this form to:

**The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High street, London SW4 7UN.**

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## Things that go bump in the night

DURING QUIET periods when politicians are not accepting bribes, fiddling their expenses and resigning to spend more time with their families, newspapers have the 'silly season' in which they fill columns with eyewitness accounts of puma-like beasts stalking the countryside, alien abductions and nuns finding the face of Mother Teresa in aubergines.

But for the Halo-Halo column, because it is dedicated to bringing you the best and latest absurdities from the god squad, life is one long silly season. And when, from time to time, the antics of randy vicars and miraculous occurrences temporarily dry up, it can be difficult to know what to fill the column with.

Take the last few weeks: Religious news highlights have amounted to little more than the on-going child abuse scandal stories, money laundering and tax evasion in the Vatican, and a new miracle from the dead Pope John Paul II, paving the way to his sainthood. This month, then, it's back to a subject we've touched on before: devils and demons.

Just like Santa, Satan too has his little helpers it seems. Last month we looked at the Catholic's demons, but Catholics don't have a monopoly on them. In Islam, they have the Jinn. We only have room for a few details of these amazing creatures here, but for an unbelievable account see [www.islamcan.com/jinn-stories/jinns-and-their-activities.shtml](http://www.islamcan.com/jinn-stories/jinns-and-their-activities.shtml). No, seriously, it's unbelievable. Look it up.

Allah created the angels from light and the Jinn 'from the smokeless flame of fire' apparently. And like humans, he created them for the purpose of worshipping him. They are invisible, but in spite of their invisibility can appear as humans, animals, trees and anything else'. And, like the Catholic demons, they have the annoying habit of possessing humans. Not only humans in fact, but also 'animals, trees and other objects'. 'By doing this, the evil Jinn hope to make people worship others beside Allah' it explains. And when this happens 'the name of Allah has to be used in expelling the Jinn'. 'We know as Muslims' it assures us 'that Jinns possess people for many reasons. Sometimes it is because the Jinn or its family has been hurt accidentally. It could be because the Jinn has fallen in love with the person.

However, most of the time possession occurs because the Jinn is simply malicious and wicked'. To set our minds at rest though, we are assured 'the next time you see something that looks like E.T. it's most probably just a wicked Jinn trying to scare and confuse you'. Well if that doesn't scare and confuse you nothing will.

A bit too far-fetched perhaps? How about goblins? These little devils can be found, apparently, amongst the people of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. And, it seems, can be a bit of an embarrassment. Fortunately for the Halo-Halo column the Bulawayo24 news website covers their activities in great detail. For example:

3 June 2013. 'Drama as goblin falls out of man's trousers in a commuter omnibus'.

30 May 2013. 'Prophet sends goblins to steal woman's G-strings'.

18 May 2013. 'Goblin impregnates woman while hubby was away for two years'.

4 May 2013. 'Drama as goblin demands sex from owner'.

24 April 2013. 'Goblin visits victim (40) in the form of his dead mother'.

2 March 2013. 'Goblin seriously burns prophet's private parts'. And the list goes on and on. Jinns and goblins not your cup of tea? Oh well, better the devil you know...

NW



## South Africa: Marikana miners' massacre

IN AUGUST last year miners at the Marikana Mine in South Africa were on strike for higher wages. The striking miners were confronted by the South African police, who fired on the miners, using live rounds from automatic pistols, shotguns and assault rifles. 34 miners were killed and 78 seriously injured and many miners were shot in the back and whilst lying on the ground. The South African state even considered charging 270 arrested miners with the Apartheid-era 'common purpose' murder of the miners massacred by the police.

The global capitalist class in alliance with the pro-capitalist ANC government of South Africa have shown the working class that going on strike, demanding higher wages involves the risk of death. British capitalists have a major role in the Marikana miners' massacre. The Marikana mine is owned by Lonmin, formerly the mining division of Lonhro once run by the notorious 'Tiny' Rowland. Even Tory Prime Minister Edward Heath in 1973 referred to the activities of

Rowland and Lonhro as 'the unacceptable face of capitalism'.

South Africa's National Union of Mineworkers has failed to fight for its members which has led to the creation of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) which represents the Marikana strikers.

A Marikana Miners Solidarity Campaign is demanding the creation of an international enquiry into the massacre, the sacking of the Minister for Police and the Commissioner for Police, charging responsible senior police officers with murder, the release of all imprisoned miners and the dropping of all charges against miners. It also calls for compensation for the families of those killed and injured, the Chief Exec of Lonmin to be put on trial for 'theft of national resources', and the end to police violence (tear gas and rubber bullets) against 'those who produce all the country's wealth' (the working class).

There is a weekly picket outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square every Thursday from 5-7pm.

SC



## A history of slumps

TO MARK the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of its *Quarterly Bulletin* the Bank of England published an article in the June issue entitled 'The UK Recession in context – what do three centuries of data tell us?' This took a look at the booms and slumps since 1701.

Actually, the terms used are 'upturns' and 'downturns'. A downturn is defined as the period between the highest point production reached and the lowest point it falls to before it starts to rise again, i. e., from peak to trough. An upturn is the opposite, the period from trough to the next peak. A cycle is defined as the period from peak to peak or from trough to trough.

A table gives the average length of cycles for various historical periods:

	Average annual GDP growth (%)	Downturn (years)	Upturn (years)	Total cycle (years)
1701-1831	1.09	2.50	2.56	5.06
1831-1871	2.21	2.60	5.40	8.00
1871-1913	1.76	4.20	4.20	8.40
1921-1938	2.56	2.00	6.50	8.50
1952-1992	2.37	2.71	3.00	5.71

The inclusion of data from the 18<sup>th</sup> century is interesting but doesn't tell us much about cycles of capitalist production. Not that the economy of the period could not be described in a sense as capitalist, but because the upturns and downturns were caused not so much by the workings of the economy itself as by the outside factors of war (in this century Britain was frequently at war) and bad harvests (agriculture then accounted for 30 per cent of GDP).

It is the later periods that are more relevant for the study of the capitalist production cycle.

1831-1871 was the period Marx studied in *Capital* and his other economic writings, though he identified the first crisis of industrial capitalism as occurring in 1825 (which can be seen in Chart 1 in the article). He suggested a cycle of about 10 years, not too far from the 8-year cycle the article identifies. At 2.21 per cent a year, this was a period of relatively rapid growth with the short downturns, a period of confident capitalist expansion.

On the other hand, 1871-1913 was a period of slower growth, with the downturns lasting just as long as the upturns and which misled Engels into thinking that capitalism had entered a period of permanent stagnation.

It is perhaps surprising to learn that the period 1921-1938 was also a period of relatively rapid growth with only short downturns but, apart from the severe but short-lived slumps of 1921 and the early 1930s, in Britain this was a period of growth in output, even if mainly confined to the South East and the Midlands. In the rest of the country unemployment remained high and shaped the popular perception of the 1930s as one big Great Depression.

The authors do not explain why they lumped together 1952-1992 as a single period when it would have been more historically useful to have broken it in the mid-1970s when the biggest downturn since 1945 occurred (as can also be seen in Chart 1). Even so, during both parts of this period the cycles were shorter with fewer deep troughs than in the previous historical periods.

According to the article's definition, as output is up on the trough of 2008 we are now in the upturn phase of the cycle even though, five years later, production is still nowhere near the 2007 level. It looks as if the current cycle is going to be longer than in the recent past. In fact it looks more like what happened in the period 1871-1913.

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# I wannabe a...

# plutocrat!

Dear Material World,

My life's dream is to become a fully paid-up member of the capitalist class. Do you have any advice? How much money do I need to join? I am willing to work hard, but I need some guidance.

Greed is good!

Wannabe Plutocrat

Dear Wannabee Plutocrat,

Your greed and ambition are commendable, but your 'willingness to work hard' suggests a certain naivety. What sort of attitude is *that* for a would-be capitalist? The so-called 'work ethic' is strictly for the proles. The key to becoming a capitalist – seeing that you lacked the good sense to be born to rich parents – is to get other people working hard *for you*!

I am sure you will understand why I cannot possibly give away specific advice on how to make money. But you happen to be in luck, because I still have a few copies left of my invaluable *Swindler's Handbook: Never Give a Sucker an Even Break* (\$99 plus sales tax, postage free). And you have my assurance that every technique described in the handbook is completely legal.

There is no annual charge for membership in the capitalist class. But you do need to have enough money for you and your family to live in comfort – or, better yet, luxury – without ever finding yourself in the humiliating situation of having to sell your



ability to work.

For detailed information on the various strata of the capitalist class in the United States, I recommend the 'Who Rules America?' website maintained by Professor G. William Domhoff of the University of California at Santa Cruz ([www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica](http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica)) and especially the paper contributed anonymously by an investment manager who serves wealthy clients.

The Occupy Wall Street movement has popularised the idea of 'the top 1 percent'. The anonymous investment manager advises that you enter the top 1 percent when your financial assets exceed \$1.2 million. He warns, however, that the bottom half of the top 1 percent is full of such small fry as lawyers, physicians, upper middle managers and small business owners.

The adult population of the US is currently about 236 million (75 percent of a total population of 315 million). So there are well over two million adults in that top 1 percent – hardly a very exclusive club! If you want to be a plutocrat, you must set your sights higher than that.

Fortunately, for just \$2 million you can join the *top* half of the top 1 percent. For \$3 million you can join the *top quarter* of the top 1 percent. For \$5.5 million you can join the top 0.1 percent, and for \$24.4 million the top 0.01 percent. At this rarefied level you will belong to a club of only 20,000 or so truly wealthy individuals. And besides being free of all financial worries you will enjoy ready access to the corridors of power, with politicians at your beck and call. You will have achieved your life's dream, for you will be not just an ordinary capitalist but a member of the *ruling circles*, a real plutocrat!

Sincerely,  
**Material World**

It is almost half a century since the first publication of Ferdinand Lundberg's best-selling *The Rich and the Super-Rich: A Study in the Power of Money Today* (Lyle Stuart, 1968). Lundberg's basic argument remains as valid as ever. In fact, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority is considerably greater today than it was then.

Chapter 1, entitled 'The Elect and the Damned', starts as follows:

Most Americans – citizens of the wealthiest, most powerful and most ideal-swathed country in the world – by a very wide margin own nothing more than their household goods, a few glittering gadgets such as automobiles and television sets (usually purchased on the installment plan, many at second hand) and the clothes on their backs. A horde if not a majority

of Americans live in shacks, cabins, hovels, shanties, hand-me-down Victorian eyesores, rickety tenements and flaky apartment buildings...

At the same time, a relative handful of Americans are extravagantly endowed, like princes in the Arabian Nights tales. Their agents deafen a baffled world with a never-ceasing chant about the occult merits of private-property ownership ... and the vaulting puissance of the American owners.

It would be difficult ... for a large majority of Americans to show fewer significant possessions if the country had long labored under a grasping dictatorship...

Most adult Americans in the quasi-affluent society of today ... are nothing more than employees. For the most part

they are precariously situated; nearly all of them are menials...

Statements such as the foregoing on the rare occasions when they are ventured (although strictly true and by no means new) are bound to be challenged by the alert propaganda watchdogs of the established order. These propagandists, when hard pressed, offer an incantation about a mythical high American standard of living which on inspection turns out to be no more than a standard of gross consumption. The statements must therefore ... be monumentally and precisely documented and re-documented. Not that this will deter the watchdogs, who have limitless resources of casuistry and dialectic to fall back upon as well as an endless supply of white paper from denuded forests.

**STEFAN**



## A dissatisfied novice

On being elevated to the Tory leadership a priority for David Cameron was to demonstrate that this was a new age with fresh, historically challenging ideas about the party organisation. Among the first of these was to end the system of choosing candidates to contest parliamentary elections by a secret gathering of constituency worthies and replace it with the American primary system of open preference by all registered voters. To begin with this seemed like a clever move – Cameron called it an ‘exciting opportunity’ to engage with the voters, designed to patch up the party’s reputation after the Great Scandal Of Expenses – which had yielded a glut of MPs facing either dismissal or attempting to salvage some tatters of their reputation by announcing that they would not stand again for Parliament.

### Anthony Steen

Cameron had promised that there would be funds to allow some 200 seats to use the new system but in the event there were only two – Gosport and Totnes. The latter had always returned a Tory MP but it was in need of a fresh Tory candidate for 2010 after the sitting MP, Sir Anthony Steen, had been vividly exposed for his extravagant expense claims. Steen is proud of owning a huge country mansion which he designated as his second home. Over four years he claimed £87,729 for, among other things, the upkeep of some 500 trees, a rabbit fence and a borehole. His response to his exposure was to put it down to ‘jealousy’ of his wealth and luxury when his behaviour had been ‘impeccable’ but he had been ‘caught on the wrong foot’ and anyway ‘What right does the public have to interfere with my private life? None’. He later apologised but there was a rumour that this did not impress the folk of Totnes, who pride themselves on being bohemian and artistic and independent enough to have their own currency – the Totnes Pound. Perhaps that would explain the rumour that Steen’s arrogance had so angered the management of a posh restaurant in the town that they refused to serve him.



Above: Anthony Steen.  
Right: Sarah Wollaston

### Rebel

In Totnes in 2009 the primary was particularly successful with a 25 percent turnout, which might have been the voters’ way of saying ‘good riddance’ to Steen. From the short list of three there emerged Sarah Wollaston, a local GP offering herself as ‘a woman with a real job’ who had no previous experience of politics. Tory chairman Eric Pickles declared himself ‘tickled to death’ and Totnes backed their choice again when Wollaston went on to win the 2010 general election with a majority more than double that of Steen in 2005. But it soon became clear that the route through which Wollaston had come into Parliament was no longer open. In the beginning there had been a promise to extend the primary method to other areas but there is no longer any impetus towards this from Downing Street, where a ‘source’ has hinted that there has been ‘zero debate’ of the matter. Wollaston

has made her mark as something of a rebel and perhaps Cameron feels that there are enough trouble-makers on his benches without recruiting more through primaries.

### Alcohol Victims

Wollaston has informed all those enthusiastic voters in Totnes that ‘open primaries are being kicked down the road’. But so far there has not been any sign of her changing her provocative style. As a doctor, one of her enduring concerns is the effect of excessive consumption of alcohol on health and social well-being – she mentions some 8,000 deaths annually – but her campaign to attempt to alleviate this through the price mechanism has not met with any interest. To put the matter into context she voices her concerns at the possibility that the government’s reluctance to act is linked with the commercial interests of Lynton Crosby, Cameron’s favourite campaign manager, in the alcohol and tobacco firm Crosby Textor. And there are other matters, on which Wollaston has expressed opinions which have raised questions about whether she has chosen to be in the right party or indeed in any of those in Westminster.

### Suicide

She does not warm to the government’s drive to ‘reform’ the NHS and the domination of it by what she calls ‘competition economists’; the overall effect, she warns, could be that the NHS will ‘go belly up’. On the same theme, after the recent suicide of a benefit claimant, she has reservations about the cuts in welfare benefits:



‘When times are tough you really have to focus on what measures help to reduce suicide because we know that this is a pattern in previous recessions ... Nobody wants to be unemployed ... I’ve vary rarely ever met people who wanted to be on benefits, but I have met people who are trapped on benefits’. None of this would nourish the career prospects of any MP, let alone a novice like

Wollaston. Which may be why she describes Cameron erecting an inner circle of Old Etonians and the like as ‘a kind of blindness’ and contrasts it with her treatment: ‘I am never put on a delegated legislation committee on something which I could contribute to. The classic case was when I was put on one on double taxation in Oman. I know nothing about double taxation in Oman’. She has been continuously frustrated in her efforts to discuss her views with Cameron and regards being in the Commons, where they pride themselves on having human interests at heart, is ‘like swimming with sharks. If there is a drop of blood in the water, off they go’.

Wollaston is not the first to be carried into Westminster on a rush of expectation and would not be the first to be tamed by threats to her career or inducements about possible promotion for those who do not rock the boat. Behind the excitement the fact is that like all those others in the past she can have nothing novel to offer and serves only to emphasise how ineffective all of them are. However the system is manipulated it remains in essence the same class-dominated chaos managed by bigots and twisters.

IVAN



# Unions should end the link with Labour

**I**n a bid to stop the Tories and the media painting Labour as a 'class-based anti-cuts party' (which planet are they living on?) Ed Miliband has proposed to weaken the links between Labour and the unions. This has been long overdue, but from a trade union point of view.

Trade unions were originally set up by groups of workers to bargain collectively, as a single unit, with

## Trade union consciousness

Some early trade unionists realised that trade union action was not enough and that workers needed to take political action too, if only to press for legislation to protect them at work through health and safety laws or to provide them with some income when out of work, whether through not being able to find a job

reaching only this and not a socialist understanding, this is quite a good definition. Its expression in Britain was the Labour Party.

Following some adverse court judgements, the TUC decided in 1900 to sponsor trade union candidates for parliament at the general election of 1906. When some of these were elected they formed the Labour Party. Up until 1918 that was all the Labour Party was – a pressure group of union-sponsored MPs. It was overwhelmingly financed by a political levy which members of affiliated unions automatically paid with their dues unless they specifically 'contracted out'.

In 1918 the Labour Party decided to transform itself into a full political party, but still linked to the unions, to rival the Tories and Liberals as a potential party of government. In other words, as a party prepared to take on the task of administering the capitalist state within the context of the capitalist production-for-profit economy.

We pointed out at the time that,

**"The split has been long overdue - from a trade union point of view"**

their employer over their wages and working conditions. Today, it is true, they have become bureaucratic organisations run by highly-paid full-timers but workers are still better off with them than without them. They do provide some protection against arbitrary acts by employers and they are able to push up wages in a boom and stop them falling too far in a slump. Everyone should join one. They are the only protection workers have under capitalism.

or through sickness, industrial injury or old age.

Lenin, writing about the same time, defined 'trade union consciousness' as 'the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc', adding 'trade-unionism does not exclude 'politics' altogether, as some imagine.' Despite his mistaken view that on their own workers were limited to

since capitalism was a profit-making system that could work only in the interests of those who lived off profits, running its state would bring even a Labour government into conflict with the workers and their unions. Which it did. Every Labour government since the first in 1924 has governed against the interests of wage and salary workers, by in particular opposing strikes or imposing wage restraint (for the whole of the period of the much-vaunted 1945 Labour government strikes were illegal and workers were prosecuted for striking).

Despite this, the unions retained their links with Labour, their leaders taking the view that this was still the best way to get some concessions

# Labour Party

pro-capitalists. To do this workers will have to take political action; to in fact form their own independent political party, but a revolutionary socialist party not a reformist Labour party, not even Bob Crow's Mark 2.

Our objection to the Labour Party is not that the workers don't need a political party but that it is the wrong type of party. This is why we have always opposed it and why we have said that the unions should not support or finance it. Our members in unions affiliated to Labour refuse to pay the 'political levy' to it by

with contracting in, only 10 percent of their members currently paying it would choose to do so. In other words, 90 percent are being conned into financing the

Labour Party.

We are not saying that unions should never support a political party. We can envisage a situation in the future, when a majority of their members have become socialists, where unions might support a mass revolutionary socialist party. But we are not there yet. What we are saying is that today, when most workers have reached only a 'trade union consciousness', unions should not support a particular pro-capitalist party.

Not doing so makes sense from a purely union point of view too. To be effective unions need to organise workers as employees faced with the same employer or set of employers irrespective of their political opinion as well as of their

religion or origin. That's irrelevant when it comes to pressurising or standing up to an employer. To be tied to a particular party alienates workers who support some other party or don't support any party and so undermines the basic union principle of 'Unity is Strength'.

Union members should seize the opportunity opened up by Miliband's proposals to distance Labour from the unions by pressing their unions to break completely with the anti-working class, capitalist reform party that Labour is.

**ADAM BUICK**

**"Our objection to the Labour Party is not that the workers don't need a political party but that it is the wrong type of party"**

for their members. Most still do. Bob Crow and the RMT are the exception. They have concluded that the present Labour Party no longer serves this purpose and want to form another union-based 'Labour' party, a Labour Party Mark 2. They want to go back to 1900 and start all over again. But at least they have realised that the Labour Party can no longer be seen even as an expression of trade union consciousness. Len McCluskey of UNITE evidently has illusions about Labour still being this, though none about the need to set up a new Labour party. Nor have we. Why try to repeat a formula which has failed once and will fail again?

## Political action needed

The view that workers should take political as well as union action is sound. Capitalism, the root cause of their problems, is upheld by the state which not only guarantees capitalist ownership and control of the means of production but is also used to actively oppose major strikes, such as the General Strike of 1926 and the Miners' Strike of 1984-5 (and many others too). So, if capitalism is to be ended, the state must be taken out of the hands of the

'contracting out' of it as every union member is legally entitled to. Here we find ourselves in agreement with Miliband's proposal that, as long as the political levy exists, union members who want to support the Labour Party financially should have to 'contract in' to paying it rather than automatically paying it unless they 'contract out'.

The present system amounts to a scam with hundreds of thousands of workers paying money to a party which doesn't represent their interests and which they wouldn't want to join anyway. Both UNITE and the GMB have estimated that,

## Action to protect profits now:

- Not give the millionaires a tax cut as long as they agree
- Cap rail fares if the railowners agree
- Cut bills if the power companies agree
- Cut bank charges if... ok, you guessed it
- Shaft the unions as usual
- and...
- Do everything the Tories are doing



**Labour**  
labour.org.uk

**Looking confused in tough times**



# Egypt: Why did the generals depose Morsi?

*For most of the year of Mohamed Morsi's presidency, government in Egypt was based on an understanding between the generals (represented by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces) and the leadership of the Moslem Brotherhood. The understanding seems to have been in place well before the elections, which the generals helped the Moslem Brotherhood to win – for instance, by tolerating numerous reported irregularities.*

**A**s president, Morsi made a great effort to return the favour and protect military interests:

- The new constitution sponsored by the Moslem Brotherhood enshrined the position of the armed forces as 'a state within the state' by entrusting military affairs to a council dominated by officers and unaccountable to parliament.

- Morsi gave the military and the police legal immunity. After a presidential commission implicated senior officers in the killing and torture of demonstrators, he described the claims as 'insults' and rewarded those concerned with promotions.

- Morsi did nothing that might threaten the interests of the armed forces as a capitalist corporation. This corporation owns an estimated 25-40 per cent of the country's economy, including vast tracts of land, and exploits conscripts as slave labour. The privatisation of state industry never extended to military property. (For more on these points, see Hesham Sallam and Zeinab Abul-Magd at [www.jadaliyya.com](http://www.jadaliyya.com).)

However, Morsi did not wholly

support the generals' policy of maintaining the flow of US military aid by fully cooperating with Israel and the United States. According to Brigadier General Ayman Salama of the Cairo Military Academy, the army thought that Morsi was being too helpful to his fellow Islamists in the Hamas regime in Gaza, thereby undermining security in the Sinai (*BBC World Service*, 5 July). Indeed, no sooner was Morsi deposed than the border with Gaza was sealed off.

Another complaint of the generals against Morsi was that his government was spending \$1.5 billion a month too much, rapidly depleting the country's financial reserves (*Guardian Weekly*, 12 July).

## **A means to a goal**

Finally, the military were highly dissatisfied with the growing isolation of Morsi's Moslem Brotherhood-dominated government from all other political forces. The understanding with the Moslem Brotherhood was not an end in itself for the generals. It was a means to their goal of stabilising the social and political situation in Egypt in such a way as

**“The armed forces owns an estimated 25-40 per cent of the country’s economy, including vast tracts of land, and exploits conscripts as slave labour”**



**Above: the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Below right: protestor with sign reading ‘Coptic Christian - Pay attention!!! One blood, one nation’**

to safeguard military interests.

In order to optimise the chance of achieving this goal, they seek to co-opt ‘realistic’ politicians from both the secular and Islamist camps who are prepared to accept military privileges while marginalising political forces committed to ‘continuing the revolution’ until full democratic rights are won for all citizens. But Morsi was alienating the very politicians whom the generals would like to co-opt.

One process that alienated many people was the so-called ‘ikhwanisation’ of government institutions – the replacement of incumbent officials by Moslem Brotherhood activists (‘ikhwan’ means ‘brothers’ in Arabic). This was a way to reward ‘brothers’ for selfless service to the organisation through the long years of persecution, but aroused the resentment of those displaced.

In fact, under different leadership the Moslem Brotherhood might have proven more flexible and managed to stay in government. One leading ‘brother’ – the physician Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh – was forced out of the Moslem Brotherhood together with his followers in 2011, but stood as an independent candidate in the presidential elections. He did quite well, coming fourth in the first round with 17.5 per cent of the vote. In July 2012

he founded the Strong Egypt Party. Fotouh represented a ‘left-liberal’ trend within the Moslem Brotherhood – he is more conciliatory toward the secular section of society and talks about ‘social justice’.

### **Cross-cutting divisions**

The presence of cross-cutting divisions within society makes the political situation in Egypt hard to understand, let alone predict. A ‘left-right’ division on economic issues exists, but – for the time being at least – it is overshadowed by the split between Islamists and secularists.



In 2012 over 35 secularist groups came together to form the National Front for Salvation of the Revolution (also known as the National Salvation Front or National Rescue Front), coordinated by Mohamed ElBaradei. These groups include pro-business ‘liberal’ parties as well as a profusion of ‘socialist’ organisations. This apparently strange alliance is held together by fear of the Islamists – not just the Moslem Brotherhood but especially the even more intolerant ‘salafis’ (fundamentalists) who seek immediate implementation of Islamic law.

Trade union activists tend to align themselves with the secularist camp, as do people concerned with the emancipation of women, cultural and intellectual freedom and human rights in general, and also non-Moslem minorities, the largest being the 10 per cent of the population who are Coptic Christians.

The class of private capitalists is also divided between the two camps, ensuring them both a flow of funds. The ‘liberal’ Free Egyptians Party was set up by Naguib Sawiris, one of the world’s richest individuals, while the Moslem Brotherhood has been financially dependent on the wealthy businessman Khairat El-Shater (furniture and textiles). Only the ‘socialist’ groups are less well provided for.

The division between secularists and Islamists partly overlaps with the division between city and countryside. Secularists and especially ‘leftists’ are concentrated in the larger cities. This enables them to stage bigger demonstrations, creating an exaggerated impression of their preponderance at the national level. In the last presidential election, the ‘left-wing’ (Nasserist) presidential candidate Hamdeen Sabbahi won the metropolitan areas of Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and Giza (Adel Iskandar, *Egypt in Flux: Essays on an Unfinished Revolution*, AUC Press 2013, p. 106), while in the country as a whole, however, he finished third with 21.5 per cent of the vote.

**STEFAN**



# Debating: A lost art?



**T**he volume of correspondence in the world is greater now than ever. The internet provides us with the ability to contribute to many debates on an infinite variety of subjects on various platforms: YouTube, Facebook, Twitter etc. One can't fail to notice that many of these 'debates' are characterised by anger and insult. Resolution or a 'meeting of minds' seems to be very rare. Anonymity allows people to vent their frustration and anger on complete strangers. Such diatribes do not, of course, represent any attempt at communication. Instead they are a record of people's alienation and despair which is focused on the 'other'.

I was once accused of calling someone stupid because I believed them to be wrong. The possibility of being wrong and intelligent simultaneously is something the ego finds difficult to accept. A disagreement (inherent in any debate) is interpreted as a conflict of egos. This represents the end of communication. Is there a way to ameliorate this phenomena? For a socialist this is a vital question since communication is the only way forward and always being 'right' will tend to alienate the opponent. If a debate focuses only on determining who is right and who is wrong then a dialectical resolution is impossible. What is meant by dialectical is a specific form of rhetoric that seeks to create a 'synthesis' between opposing views. In this way the polemic can be moved forward productively instead of stalling in egoism. All such disagreements represent the dialectical forces inherent within the cultural context of the debate. What's more – this historical context allows only one real political debate that always lies beneath what ever is being discussed! I will now attempt to defend such a seemingly incredible position.

Superficially the multiplicity of debates on Facebook appear unconnected with an endless variation of subject matter. Everything from musical taste to politics and religion is hotly contested. Someone has said that there is a certain inevitability of

the mention of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis terminating many emotionally charged political debates. The reason for this is not just the desire to demonise the opponent and their perspective but it also reflects an underlying fundamental confrontation between those who want and need authoritarian social structures and those who



cannot stomach them. The latter see all kinds of conspiracies by the 'establishment' to keep their power while reactionaries long for a leader with simple political answers.

And so the debate rages on impotently, sometimes even provoking an online petition with thousands of signatures. Of course nothing changes and another 'single issue' takes up the energies of liberals and reactionaries inspired, usually, by the latest disaster created by capitalism. Some years ago when the infamous tsunami hit Sri Lanka I thought, at least this time, we could not blame capitalism for this 'natural' disaster. As it happens the early warning system had been abandoned because of 'cost' concerns so yet again the system was at the root of destruction. Another example is that of the hypotheses of global warming. Given the title of the theory one would expect it to be the ultimate debate of our time. But again it is the economic imperative of profit that underlies this catastrophe – no worker (indigenous or otherwise) would willingly destroy the environment if they could get other employment to feed themselves and their families. It is the height of hypocrisy for 'middle-class' environmentalists in advanced industrial societies to criticise just

this one element of capitalism while they enjoy a comfortable life style which is dependent on the system. Economics, or at least, market economics has become a godhead for reactionaries in that it must be worshipped and cannot be denied.

It is a different story when those indulging in this religion of Mammon are directly affected adversely – then it's the fault of rogue bankers, etc. In debates people congratulate themselves for being realistic in contrast to their opponents – when, in reality, they are both being equally idealistic. One ideology in all its permutations reflects the economic needs of the ruling class and the other, debased and confused with the single issue problematic, represents the needs of the immense majority of humanity. A true dialectic can only be achieved when this is recognised – a result of the historical forces that have left just two social classes.

I'm aware that this perspective sounds suspiciously dualistic – not unlike Christianity's Armageddon (last battle between good and evil) and the Viking Ragnarok, etc. It may be that it's the other way around and that these mythologies represent a deep social need to return to the communism of pre private property societies – as Rastafarians believe: I and I becomes the One again in Zion. So what constitutes the socialist synthesis? Revolution, my comrade. As long as capitalism lasts with all its travails then so does the same solution. The coalition of Whigs and Tories seem intent on taking us back to the 1800s. No re-branding can change capitalism and we call upon all those well-intentioned people obsessed with single issue politics to join us in dealing with the disease and not just the symptoms. It is purely self-indulgence to involve yourself in reformism because you 'can't wait for the revolution'. It is you that keeps the rest of us waiting. As to what Facebook will be debating after the revolution there's always: 'who was the most authentic roots reggae artist – Bob Marley or Burning Spear?' But don't get me started, that's a whole other debate – the synthesis of which still eludes me.

**WEZ**

# Shipwreck!

## A Tale of Desert Island Discord

There's a cold wind blowing in the east and a roaring fire in the grate, so put a fine glass of porter in my hand, boys, and I'll tell you a story of seafaring and adventuring.

On the ninth day of October, in the year AD —, it happened that a fast clipper five days out of Liverpool, and a gaff-rigged schooner tacking due east from St Kitts, were caught in a big blow some miles to the west of Cape Verde. The schooner demasted and pitched over, while the clipper fought to make headway but was swept onto hidden rocks and broke up.

The schooner had two passengers, bankers by the name of Wilcox and Small, who were decanted in the ocean and found themselves clinging together for dear life onto a broken mizzen beam. Well, perhaps not for dear life, since they held on with just one hand apiece, while in the other each holding a sizable bag of gold coins, the provenance of which, whether fair or foul, was never rightly determined.

Poseidon must have smiled on these men of substance, for they managed to make landfall on the west side of a small uncharted island. However, not being by nature, it seems, agreeable fellows, it wasn't long before they discovered this plain fact for themselves, and they vowed to go their separate ways, one to the north and the other to the south.

Mr Wilcox went north, taking his money with him and announcing his intention to find a suitable spot on the beach in order to sit it out until help should arrive. It appears that Mr Wilcox remained defiant in this resolve, for he sat at his post for some weeks, until the crabs got him. Sad to tell, his money gave him no assistance whatsoever, but sat mutely beside him in the sand. It's still there to this day, I shouldn't wonder, and hasn't moved a mussel since, if you'll pardon the levity.

Mr Small, going south, had somewhat better fortune. He happened upon a party of sailors who were washed up from the wreck of the clipper and already, as sailors are wont to be, drunk as skunks on a salvaged barrel of grog. They were good-hearted souls, and once they had sobered up and taken stock they agreed readily to his suggestions, for it was clear to all that as a banker and a man of learning it was only right and proper that he should take charge of things in the matter of provisions and organisation. Now, Mr Small being a fair-minded and honest businessman, he said, and not wishing to drive the men into arduous labour for no return, he proposed to draw up a contract in order to pay the sailors from his bag of coins for their work, so much to build him a house, so much to hunt and fish, and likewise for whatever manner of other tasks he deemed appropriate. In their turn, and in proper respect for civilised trading agreements, the sailors undertook to yield to him all produce of their labours, and

to buy back from him such as might be necessary for their upkeep, be it rent, vittals or any other thing covered by the contractual arrangement.

Things passed well enough for a while, until the sailors began to grumble that Mr Small seemed to have the best of it all, the best food, the best house, the best foragings, while they seemed to have very little, and all the money they earned seemed to end up right back in the banker's pocket. Considering that it was they who were doing all the work, muttered the sailors, this did not seem altogether above board. They collected at the banker's palatial hut one day and put the matter to him. Mr Small heard them out patiently, and then when they had finished, made his reply. See, he said, how well we have done here! We have houses, food, clothes, everything that we could reasonably wish for. And who has done all this? Why, I of course! Have I not paid you fair and square for every undertaking? Is it not the wealth that I alone brought to this island which has seen the food onto your plates and the clothes onto your backs? Do you begrudge me my small profit when it is my wealth that created all the wealth you see? Unable to fathom this, the sailors fell to arguing amongst themselves. Indeed it wasn't long before the arguing

became fighting, and Mr Small's party being the better paid, there were quite a few dissenters strung up and others chased off. However it fell out I know not exactly, but I can tell you, as sure as I'm sitting here drinking

this fine ale, there wasn't one blessed soul of the lot of them left alive by the time the rescue ship turned up.

And how comes it that I am here to tell this tale, you may ask? Well, it's no mystery, for I was among the third party to escape from that fateful storm, another group of sailors from the clipper who reached shore on the far side of the island. Washed up on the surf amid broken spars we were and, as luck would have it, a full barrel of grog and no officers about, so aye, first things first we too got ourselves as drunk as a box of Bilbao herring. But when we had sobered up, the next morning, we set about us to building shelters, and to hunting, fishing, and likewise acquiring all the creature comforts with our own hands, for we said to ourselves, like as not t'would be a season or two before we'd see dear old Liverpool again. In truth it wasn't a bad old life, and not too much labour either, after we had things straight. We passed tolerably well, on the whole, and scratched our heads in amazement when one day a starved refugee reached our shore and told us of his flight from Mr Small's village, and of the goings-on in that benighted place.

And now I'll take another stoup of ale if you please, for there is my brief tale all but told. Rescue came in the fullness of time, and we thanked the grace of God we'd had no outbreaks of the flux while we were there. Game was in fair supply, the weather mild, and no savage indigenes intent on war and murder. T'is many a long year since last I saw that island, but not a day goes by that I don't think of her, set in that sea of azure in the radiant light of the tropics. And I never fail to offer up a quiet prayer to the Almighty, to thank Him for not setting us ashore with a banker.

Witnessed and attested by PJS, August, AD —



## An unlikely story

Since the date was 200 RW – that is to say, 200 years since the human race had decided to establish a Rational World – it was announced that a lecture was to be given at the local meeting hall.

The lecture was to be about the old society, the society that had been abolished when the revolution took place.

‘I know’, the lecturer began, ‘that when our new society was fully in operation, the old way of doing things seemed so indefensible that many of its details were quickly forgotten.’

However, he added, he had been doing much research, and now wished to describe the old society.

The lecturer was quite deaf, and the noise he heard from time to time from his audience he took to be sounds of agreement.

When he had finished, the chairman threw the meeting open. The first speaker from the floor politely thanked the speaker for coming to share his findings, but the rest of what he said was not so respectful.

‘I have to say’, he went on, ‘that I honestly couldn’t accept what the lecturer has told us tonight.’

‘He claims that in the old days, when capitalism was rampant, society was divided basically into two classes.

‘One class, much the smaller, owned everything worth owning – all the factories, the mines, the offices, the transport – everything: and they lived very comfortable, or even luxurious, lives, on the rent, interest and profit they gained from the work of the rest of the population.

‘And all the work they (a few of them) did, if you could call it work, was to make sure the rest of the population worked for them.

‘Everyone else had to spend their lives working for the benefit of this small owning class; and their returns from all their hard labour were very much smaller, and most of them spent their lives worrying about money, one way or another.

‘Now I ask you – *is that at all likely?* I mean, they were human beings then, just like we are human beings now. How could they have put up with such a society?

‘I know they were deluged with propaganda practically from the time they were born – the newspapers, the radio, the television, the pulpits, the books – virtually all of them hammered home the idea that this was the only way humans could organize themselves, that anything else which might be suggested was just an impossible dream. I know all that.

*‘But how could almost the entire human race accept*

*such a system?*

‘Not only was the structure of things theoretically unjust, in that the people who did all the work got a miserably small reward, just enough to keep them alive, and mostly in just sufficient health to enable them to spend their entire working lives labouring for the benefit of other people – I say, the system was not only theoretically unjust, but unjust in practice, in everyday reality, so that the great majority of people could see that they were being short-changed every day of their lives.

‘Now is it likely that human beings, people just like us, would calmly and patiently accept such rank injustice?’

He paused. ‘I suppose that if this state of affairs, if this monstrously unfair division of the good things of life between those who did not work but consumed in abundance on the one hand, and those who did all the work but consumed very little, on the other, was in some way hushed up, kept secret so far as that was possible – perhaps you could say that the secrecy might go some way to explaining why this society was accepted – not only by the small class of owners, but equally by the large class of workers.

‘But there was no secrecy, no attempt at keeping this totally inequitable system under wraps. As the workers went each day to their work on their crowded buses or trains, they could, and did, read graphic descriptions in each day’s paper about the glorious lives lived by their betters.

‘The working people went back every night to the little boxes they called homes, reading the evening papers with their full details of the vast mansions owned by the rich – many of them indeed, owning two or three or more of these palatial establishments in the very best parts of town, or in the country, surrounded by many acres of parks.

‘Is it likely that anyone could accept such a state of things without trying immediately to overthrow it? And yet the lecturer has tried to persuade us that the people of the so-called democracies voted at each election for politicians who promised them more of the same – while in other countries, ruled by dictators, people accepted that they were not even allowed to vote freely for the system that kept them in subjection. I just can’t swallow the stories told by this evening’s lecturer.’

The lecturer stood to reply.

‘I agree that it’s all very, very unlikely, and yet it happened. People have often been unable to accept the obvious facts of existence. When the great astronomer Galileo claimed that the Earth moved round the sun, he was hauled in front of the Inquisition. Everyone knew that the Earth stood still, while the sun, moon and stars moved round it, because the Bible said so in about five different places. Galileo was forced to recant, but he is supposed to have said afterwards, ‘Eppur si muove’ – ‘for all that, it does move’. And, believe it or not, just as nearly everybody then knew that the Earth didn’t move, people before the revolution did support the old system – however unlikely it seems to us now. Don’t forget, our present system shows that ultimately people do accept the world as it is – just as even the religious people finally had to accept that the world does move.’

**ALWYN EDGAR**

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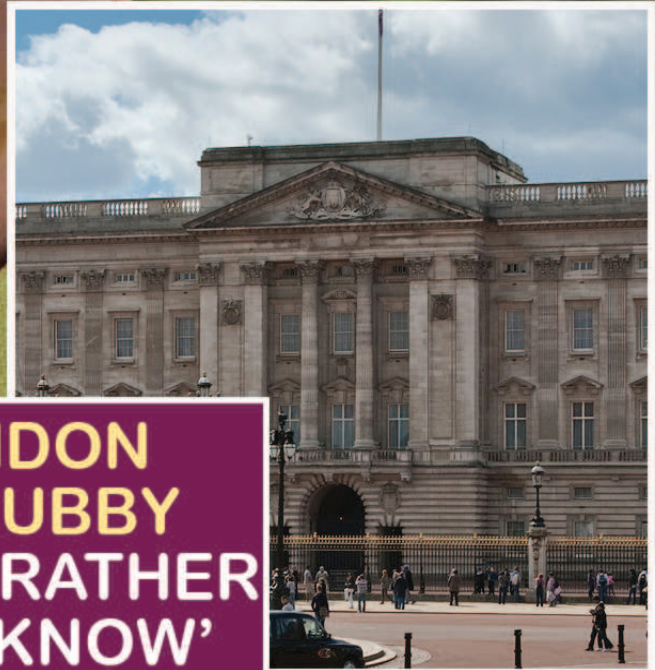
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MYSELF THAN BE  
A WORKER'**



## OBITUARY

### Eva Goodman (1927-2013)

One of the most long-standing members of the Socialist Party has died at the age of 85. Eva Goodman became a member in 1947 at a time of intense activity for the Party, especially in the London area, when indoor rallies and outdoor platforms were common and attracted large numbers of people. Eva threw herself wholeheartedly into this activity, cycling to and between venues. She grew to be a commanding presence at conferences and meetings over the years, knowing exactly what she wanted to say and saying it without standing on ceremony, with clarity and humour and, above all, in a way that compelled the attention of her listeners.

Her family had been refugees from Hitler's Germany and were lucky to find asylum in London just before the Second World War broke out. After the war, in 1946 and before joining the Party, Eva found employment at Marks and Spencer's Head Office and worked there for 40 years until retirement as a packaging technologist. She was well aware of the fact that being a socialist and wanting a completely different kind of world, one of co-operation and economic equality, didn't mean that you could, or should, exclude yourself from the world as it existed. You had to get by in capitalism, often with people who didn't necessarily share your view of the world or your social and political aspirations. So, apart from gaining the respect and admiration of those she worked with, Eva cultivated many interests outside the Party such as opera, theatre, cycling (she was a member of the Cyclists' Touring Club and cycling was one of her passions for much of her life) and, latterly, football. She was an enthusiastic member of Fulham Supporters' Club, for many years being a season-ticket holder and rarely missing a match till ill-health kept her away.

Over the years Eva took on a number of important jobs in the Party. She was elected to the Executive Committee on many occasions, she was Secretary of her branch, Overseas Contacts Secretary, and Secretary to the committee that produces the Socialist Standard – whatever her roles were, she always carried them out with the utmost diligence and efficiency. One of her concerns was that, when the Party put its case in print – and in particular in the Socialist Standard – it should do so in the most effective and convincing way possible. To this end she conducted a persistent and persuasive campaign against what she called the 'Hallelujah Chorus' – the formula words that all too often ended articles in the Standard. Her argument was that the Socialist solution should emerge clearly and naturally from the arguments in the article and not have to be tacked on at the end like some kind of 'hosannah'.

After she retired from employment, Eva carried on enthusiastically with Party activity but also became a volunteer teacher at Brackenbury Primary School in Hammersmith, assisting pupils with learning disabilities for a number of years and stopping only when the stairs became too much for her.

A large number of people gathered to say their final farewell to Eva at her funeral on 14th June, including her nephew who had travelled from Spain and spoke movingly about 'a favourite who brought so much joy into my life'. She will be greatly missed by all her family members, including her partner, Melvin, and by so many others both inside and outside the Socialist Party.



### The decline of manufacturing: good or bad?

IN JUNE the Office for National Statistics published an analysis, entitled *170 Years of Industrial Change across England and Wales*, of how people's occupations have changed between the 1841 census and the latest one in 2011. One of the key points it drew attention to was:

'Manufacturing was the most dominant industry in 1841 accounting for 36% of the workforce, followed closely by services at 33%. The expansion of services and decline in manufacturing meant that in 2011, 9% worked in manufacturing and 81% in services.'

The remaining 10 per cent was made up of agriculture 1 per cent (down from 22 per cent in 1841), energy and water (including mining) 1 per cent, and construction 8 per cent.

Services had already overtaken manufacturing as far back as 1881 but it was only from 1961 that the gap between the two began to widen. Until then each accounted for more or less 40 per cent.

Marx pointed to the results of the 1861 census to back up his statement in *Capital* (chapter 15, section 6) that:

'the extraordinary productiveness of modern industry, accompanied as it is by both a more extensive and a more intense exploitation of labour-power in all other spheres of production, allows of the unproductive employment of a larger and larger part of the working-class.'

After deducting the young, the old, the sick, housewives, rentiers and those he called 'the ideological' classes, such as government officials, priests, lawyers, soldiers, &c., out of a total England and Wales population of 20 million he arrived at a figure of 8 million in work, of which he listed:

Agriculture	1,098,261
Textiles	642,607
Mining	565,835
Metalworking	396,998
'The servant class'	1, 208,648

And he commented:

'All the persons employed in textile factories and in mines, taken together, number 1,208,442; those employed in textile factories and metal industries, taken together,

number 1,039,605; in both cases less than the number of modern domestic slaves. What a splendid result of the capitalist exploitation of machinery!'

The ONS analysis confirms that 'in 1841, almost one in five working people (18%) were employed in domestic offices and personal services, roughly half of everyone working in service industries.'

Since Marx's day 'the extraordinary productiveness of modern industry' has still made possible an increasing proportion of the workforce in services, though more in those Marx called 'the ideological' classes, especially people working in national and local government rather than in 'the servant class.' Perhaps surprisingly, the largest service group today is 'wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles, with 4.2 million people, 16% of the working population and about one fifth of everyone working in service industries.'

What exactly Marx meant by 'unproductive employment' has been widely debated. The ONS defines a 'service industry' as 'where services are provided rather than a good being produced', which implies that production involves turning out some tangible, material product. Marx himself didn't go that far as he regarded the work of transporting and storing goods as productive.

We could argue over how much of the ONS service 'industries' amount to 'unproductive employment' in Marx's sense, but the overall situation is clear. Increasing productivity has meant that, just as fewer and fewer people are needed to produce the food we eat so fewer and fewer people are needed to produce the material things society needs. It makes the case for production directly for use (to 'serve' people's needs), which socialism will allow, even more relevant.



### The Shame Show - Caroline Smith and Paul Green

A 'SCRATCH night' in late May at the Milton Keynes Gallery was the premiere of a 'free and untamed' performance of *The Shame Show* created by performance artist Caroline Smith in collaboration with Paul Green from Avant Gardening arts collective. Caroline's previous performance art has been seen at the Royal Festival Hall, Tate Modern, ICA, Whitechapel Gallery and the Hayward Gallery.

Caroline's alter ego in *The Shame Show* is Mertle Merman, a 1950s suburban housewife modelled after celebrity chef Elizabeth Craig. 'Mertle Merman' reflects petty bourgeois gentility and vaudevillian show business but with a 'nice' subversive touch. Mertle first appeared in Caroline's *Eating Secret* which was described as 'deliciously dark' by *The Guardian*. Caroline has said that 'Mertle is a façade, from a time when our relationship with food was simpler. She is easy to talk to.'

Caroline brings this aspect of Mertle to *The Shame Show* where she investigates concepts of shame in our lives and bourgeois society in a participatory, interactive game/variety show which subverts ideas of what popular entertainment can be, and her old fashioned charm draws confidences from her audience. There is also an educational aspect to this 'light entertainment' perhaps reflecting Caroline Smith's former job as a lecturer in creative writing, journalism and media writing at the University of Greenwich.

Mertle informed the audience that the word 'shame' has its origin in the Old English word 'schamu' which means 'to cover', and so we have covering oneself as an expression of shame. She informed the audience about Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* which identifies the tell-tale signs of 'shame'; blushing, confusion, downward cast eyes, slack posture, lowered head. She spoke about sociologist Charles Cooley and his concept of the 'looking glass self' in *Human Nature and the Social Order* where he wrote 'the thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind'. Caroline Smith's work in *Eating Secret* and *The Shame Show* concerns 'themes that explore complicity and exchange and the inevitable disturbances that arise between Self and Other.'

Paul Green appeared as Cardinal Paul (in full Roman Catholic ecclesiastical garb) from the Vatican who had come to England to stop 'David Cameron making everyone marry a homosexual'. Paul Green also animated the space with film of moments of shame in popular culture such as Britney

## **"She interviewed this reviewer who appeared as Steve the Bolshevik"**

Spears (her shame is releasing a new record). There is raucous rock'n'roll footage of Cher and Tina Turner singing *Shame, Shame, Shame* from the era which Foucault described as a 'surge of libido modulated by the class struggle'. There are satirical swipes at Stonewall's 'Bigot of the Year' Cardinal Keith O'Brien and his 'shame' in having to resign recently for 'inappropriate sexual conduct with junior clergy'. Paul Green's subversive 'catholic' humour recalls defenestrating Roman Catholic bishops in Bunuel/Dali's *L'Age d'Or* and John Waters 'most overtly Catholic film' *Multiple Maniacs* which covers a gamut of sex and rosary beads in church, Christ and the stations of the cross, a religious whore, and the apparition of the Infant Jesus of Prague.

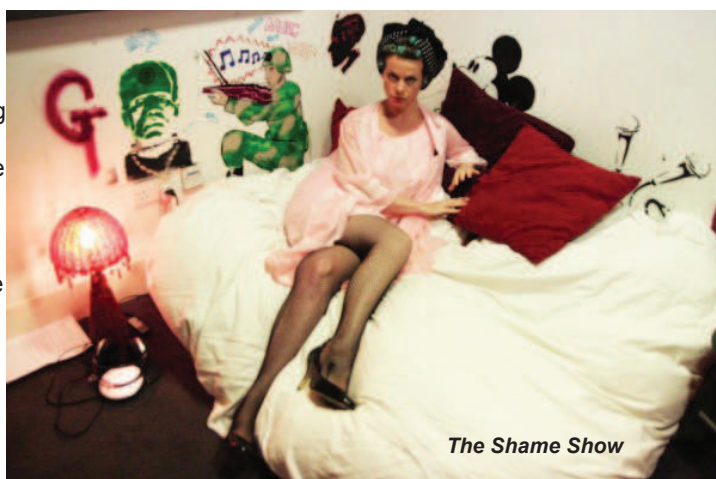
Mertle related to the audience that her husband had gone to sea in the Second World War and had never returned but she confessed that she had eaten him. This was a 'secret' not divulged before in *Eating Secret*. Mertle is rather a subversive persona for the 1950s, the whole idea of eating her husband suggests an assault on perceived hetero-sexist patriarchy. Rousseau wrote 'when the people shall have nothing more to eat, they will eat the rich', and film makers like Paul Bartel in *Eating Raoul*, Godard in *Week End* and Pasolini in *Pigsty* have all used what 'anti-psychiatrist' David Cooper called 'cannibalism as a ritualistic practice or a direct expression of hunger.'

Mertle interviewed Austrian comedienne Alice Frick about shame and being Austrian, and names like Josef Fritzl and Adolf Hitler are mentioned. She interviewed this reviewer who appeared as 'Steve the Bolshevik from the Socialist Review' but this is corrected to 'more Menshevik, a socialist writing for the *Socialist Standard*' and that 'shame is a class society construct and in socialism the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all'. The sudden appearance of a 'socialist' recalls the appearance of 'Steve the Weatherman' in John Waters's *Multiple Maniacs*.

Marxist (*Gay Left*) writer and academic Richard Dyer described Caroline Smith's *Spank* as 'haunting and hallucinatory'. Dyer in his writings enthuses about 'conceptualizing radical pleasure' and this is an apt description for *The Shame Show* by Caroline Smith and Paul Green.

A new Caroline Smith alter ego is Rita (The Great Crested) Grebe in her *Birdwatcher's Wives* where 'twitchers' can 'locate their inner bird' in a series of workshops being held in Southend on Sea, Leigh on Sea and Wallasea Island in Essex. Paul Green continues as a 'curatorially subversive explorer' at [everydreamhome.wordpress.com](http://everydreamhome.wordpress.com) where he explores the far shores of popular culture and the historical and social relationships between popular culture and LGBT communities.

**STEVE CLAYTON**



## So Happy Together

**Together: the Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation.**

**Richard Sennett. Penguin. £9.99**



Socialist society will be based on co-operation: people working together to meet human need and so benefiting each other. This is preferable to both isolation and competition. But, as sociologist

Richard Sennett points out here, co-operation can be destructive when it is us-against-you and so becomes collusion (as with insider deals).

One of his claims is that modern society has weakened co-operation in various ways. This may involve increasing the extent of short-term employment, so that people have less chance to get to know their fellow-workers and so learn how to work with them. Or increased inequality has led to greater social distance between people. Moreover, society has produced 'a new character type', which insists that everybody is the same and so undermines the prospects of co-operating with people who differ in some way. People withdraw into themselves and interact as little as possible with others. Overall, 'modern society is "de-skilling" people in practising cooperation'.

These are quite grand and interesting ideas, but unfortunately relatively little is said in support of them. Sennett also claims that co-operation has in recent times been perverted 'in the name of solidarity'. The 'Left' have supposedly responded to the evils of capitalism by means of solidarity rather than co-operation, especially the destructive solidarity of us-against-them. Marx is singled out for criticism. His *Critique of the Gotha Programme* is said to have encapsulated the refusal to co-operate, seeing the policies it attacked as insufficiently revolutionary.

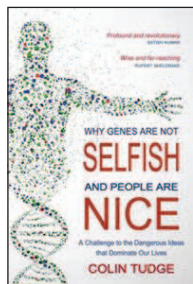
But this raises the question of when co-operation is appropriate and when it is not. People can work together without necessarily having the same goal in mind, but in a political movement there must be a shared aim; otherwise working together is scarcely practicable. When the Socialist Party's Declaration of Principles states that we are 'hostile to every other party', this is a straightforward statement of policy. We do not work with parties that,

even if 'alleged labour,' in fact stand for the continuation of capitalism and its oppression. Moreover, we expose such parties as supporters of capitalism and hence enemies of the working class. This principled approach to co-operation is not what Sennett dismisses as collusion, for it is in the interest of the overwhelming majority.

**PB**

## So Hippy Together?

**Why Genes are not Selfish. Colin Tudge, Floris Books, 2013, £16.99**



'...our politics is unjust, our economic system borders on the insane, our governments for the most part are not on our side, our science which should be our great liberator

has become the handmaiden of big business, while religion is all over the place...' writes Tudge in this over-priced book.

So who is to blame? Comes the answer: Richard Dawkins or to be more general, neo-Darwinism or alternatively atheist-materialists, apparently all much the same).

And what shall we do? Answer: Get God! Or, as Tudge puts it, transcendence, meaning a sort of generalised metaphysical religion.

The most part of this book is an attempt to illustrate the extent of altruistic and cooperative behaviour in nature. This is done far better by Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid*, once essential reading for socialists, who is, of course, unacknowledged. *Mutual Aid* has been criticised by some Marxists, e.g. by Mattick (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/mattick-paul/1956/kropotkin.htm>), despite a recent defence by Stephen Jay Gould (<http://www.marxists.org/subject/science/essays/kropotkin.htm>).

The focus of the book is on the alleged errors of Dawkins and his supposed social-Darwinism. This seems a little unfair considering the chapter entitled 'Nice guys finish first' added to the second edition of his classic *The Selfish Gene*. And there is little evidence that neoliberals (the villains of the piece) read beyond the first few pages of *The Selfish Gene*.

Have Dawkins and his fellow neo-Darwinists really been that influential? Could they really have called into being the modern face of capitalism, referred to in the book

as neo-liberalism? Of course not: the notion is absurd. Ideas create reality only if Descartes' axiom 'I think therefore I am', referred to several times in the text, applies. On the contrary reality, in the shape of hard Gradgrind facts, shapes our ideas. How could it be otherwise? The economic system we call capitalism, for instance, did not arise from any idea, social-Darwinist or otherwise, but as a development of forces already existing in society (which is why it is so difficult to give an exact date as to when feudalism became capitalism). Similarly, the neo-liberal programme, so far as it differs from any other form of capitalism, was already well developed, if not implemented, when Dawkins wrote *The Selfish Gene*. Wasted words, however, to the author: any form of joined up thinking is anathema to Tudge-ites, who extol the virtues of intuition (I do not need to think: I already know).

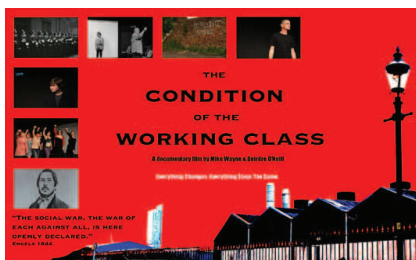
Our critics may well chide us for attacking a work extolling unselfishness and condemning conflict. But to the worker, unselfishness means joining the ranks of what Robert Tressell called the *Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*: working ourselves to an early grave so that others may enjoy the high life. We socialists are irredeemable materialists, which necessarily invokes atheism, as Tudge correctly deduces. We look out, collectively and cooperatively it is true, for our own material interests. We also do not shun conflict. Fighting the class war through the unions and other similar organisations, and bringing that war to a successful conclusion through political action, is our business.

Despite his talk of rethinking "the big ideas" that underlie the modern world, Tudge does not repudiate capitalism or the state. He questions nothing, including religion, the biggest of the big ideas. In effect, he and his peers, represent 'nice' capitalism, the old 'social-democratic' welfare state, which, when capitalist interests find it burdensome, can be shrugged off like an old blanket, or the small-scale organic food opt-out, which even now lies in wait, the 'nice' policeman to neo-liberalism's head-buster. We emphasise that capitalism cannot be changed to operate in the interest of the working class, not by legislative reform and certainly not by the infusion of religion. Only the overthrow of the ruling class can do that. Tudge and his buddies are at best irrelevant and at worst road blocks on the highway to revolution.

**KAZ**

**Continued p.22**

## The Condition of the Working Class



The SERTUC Film Club at TUC Congress House in London recently screened *The Condition of the Working Class*, a new documentary film by Michael Wayne and Deirdre O'Neill who had previously worked together on the 2009 documentary film *Listen to Venezuela*. Over a period of eight weeks, the film follows a group of actors and non-professionals in *The Ragged Collective* (a homage to Robert Tressell) in Salford and Manchester as they work to put on a theatrical project based on their own working class experiences, and the Friedrich Engels book *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*.

The actors tell of working class life in Manchester in the age of austerity economics in capitalism where 'working class people are hurt by the cuts, there are attacks on collectivity, the bourgeoisie use divide and rule tactics, and people who have nothing want change'. Engels wrote 'the social war, the war of each against all, is here openly declared. People regard each other only as useful objects; each exploits the other, and

the end of it all is that the stronger treads the weaker under foot; and that the powerful few, the capitalists, seize everything for themselves, while to the weak many, the poor, scarcely a bare existence remains'.

Like in Ken Loach's film *Spirit of 45*, some of the people in this film feel that Thatcher is to blame for everything, as if capitalism was only invented in 1979 but the reality is that she presided over the operation of capitalism during the worst part of the slump phase of its economic cycle, and was the head of an openly pro-capitalist government.

There are many differences between life today in Manchester and life at the time of the Engels book but fundamentally there is no change as the capitalist mode of production grinds relentlessly on. The film participants state that a person has to 'sell my labour or starve' (the working class sell their labour power to the capitalist), that 'society is divided into a bourgeois ruling class and a working class', the BBC is referred to as 'the *Bourgeois Broadcasting Corporation*', and 'the bourgeoisie are riddled with class prejudice, oppress the working class, and use the power of wealth and the state so that the rich look after the rich'. A reference is made to the gentrification of parts of Manchester such as the Docks where it is pointed out 'the working class built Salford Quays' which recalls Brecht's poem *A Worker Reads History*: 'who built the seven gates of Thebes?/the books are filled with names of kings/was it the kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone?'

The film demonstrates what Engels wrote, that 'the humanity of the workers is constantly manifesting itself pleasantly. They have experienced hard times themselves, and can therefore feel for those in trouble, whence they are more approachable, friendlier, and less greedy for money, though they need it far more than the property-holding class'.

*Film International* commented 'this is not a film, it's a rehearsal for revolution' which is true in a sense, but unfortunately no one mentions the word 'socialism'.

**STEVE CLAYTON**

## The Socialist Party badge



Cheque or postal order (no cash) for £10.00 payable to SPGB SW Regional Branch, c/o Veronica Clanchy, FAO: South West Regional Branch, 42 Winifred Road, Poole, Dorset. BH15 3PU. Any queries, please phone 01202 569826. Please include own phone number or other contact details.



## Hidden Cameraderie

Traditionally, if you were the victim of a hidden camera show, then you'd find out when you heard 'smile, you're on *Candid Camera*' or realised the officious bearded idiot who's just

crushed your car is Jeremy Beadle. But if you're caught by Channel 4's *Eye Spy*, you'll be confronted by a film crew scrutinising the ethics of your behaviour. The programme tries to distance itself from the schadenfreude of *Candid Camera* and Beadle's *About* by using the hidden camera format to attempt to gauge the nation's moral fibre. *Eye Spy* uses set-up situations to test how the people stumbling into them will react.

Presenter Stephen Fry asks what you would do if you found money lying around, whether it's stacked up in bundles in a holdall, or a tenner in a dropped wallet with a return address inside. Would you help a lad using a wheelchair get up a long flight of steps, or an elderly shopper in a supermarket,

even if they became a bit too demanding? The answer seems to be that we'll usually go out of our way for someone else, but we're less likely to if we can't relate to the person behind the need. Only the discarded wallets which contained a photo were returned, for example.

Another set-up involves a restaurant being hired by the programme, and an actor playing an obnoxiously bigoted waiter. A volunteer couple, either gay or of different ethnicities, then sit through the waiter revealing his prejudices within earshot of the other diners. Will anyone else rally round to challenge the waiter? Many of us would, although apparently we're less quick to do so outside London.

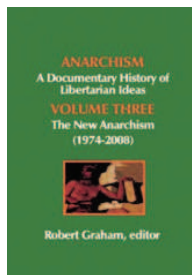
The show generally doesn't try to be scientific by running the tests on a large scale. This is a pity, as some of the scenarios could give us interesting conclusions about social norms and peer pressure, if we excuse the duplicity involved. Society wouldn't function if people weren't basically co-operative and helpful, and how this is expressed depends on society's principles. But instead of this kind of analysis, we just get Stephen Fry making the occasional patronising remark from the back of a taxi, presumably on his way to film *Q!*.

**Mike Foster**



## Bumper Anarchism

**Anarchism: Volume 3 (1974-2012)**  
**Ed Robert Graham. Black Rose Books, 2013. £19.99**



There is always room and occasion enough for a true book on any subject; as there is room for more light [on] the brightest day, and more rays will not interfere with the first.'

(Thoreau)

Does this book really illuminate the darkness of our souls? Or more prosaically, is there room on our bookshelves for another Bumper Book of Anarchism? The answer is probably no. There are, it must be said, some interesting essays in this work, subtitled 'A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas'. Some like Ashanti Alston's personal history of 'Black Anarchism' are even inspiring. Others are a useful potted history of recent events, eg. the Interprofessional Workers' Union account of 'Russian Capitalism'. However, outside the borderlands where the spark of Malatesta and Goldman clearly still burns bright, it would seem from this book that contemporary anarchist commentary is little more than an academic sport. It comes as no surprise that the first item in Graham's selection is from the *New Left Review*, Britain's premier distributor of intellectual flannel.

The selection and arrangement of

material are by no means objective. Indeed, it is markedly obvious that the author has a hidden agenda. This is particularly noticeable in the core section on 'Libertarian Alternatives'. In the author's mind, this is doubtless supposed to pose the classic anarchist dilemma of mutualism versus collectivism. That the terms have no particular meaning or interest to a revolutionary is made abundantly clear by the concise contribution jointly authored by Socialist Party member Adam Buick and the late John Crump. The final article in the sequence comes down firmly in favour of mutualism, the nonsensical 'exploration of forms of market capable of moving beyond the capitalist market', or as we might term it 'Capitalism writ small'. Given this preference, socialists should by no means imagine that anarchists per se are naturally 'on our side'.

**KAZ**

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## Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

## London

### Clapham

Sunday **18 August** 3.00pm  
 Russian Revolution in Retreat 1920-24  
 THE CURSE OF CIVIL WAR  
 Socialist Party premises, 52 Clapham High St, London, London, SW4 7UN.

### Chiswick

Tuesday **20 August** 8.00pm  
 WHAT IS GOING ON IN SYRIA?  
 Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, W4 4JN.

## Glasgow

Wednesday **21 August** 8.30pm  
 A LOOK AT SOME BARRIERS TO SOCIALISM  
 Speaker: Richard Donnelly  
 Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 6HT

## London

Sunday **25 August** 4.00pm  
 Social Event  
 Finsbury Park (Finsbury Gate end).  
 Bring own refreshments.

### Labour, Lib-Dem, Tory



**The Socialist Standard examines their case**

## Declaration of Principles

*This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.*

### Object

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

# 50 Years Ago

## Mr. Wilson on class

IN A recent interview published in the *Observer*, Harold Wilson, Leader of the Labour Party, made some extraordinary statements. Among other things he said:

'The Labour Party must represent the whole country. If you mean what class do I think I am—well, what is the answer? Elementary school, Oxford common room, what does it add up to? There are millions of people—trained, skilled, professional—for whom these phrases about class are becoming more and more meaningless. The white coat, the growing technological character of modern industry is making some of the old battlegrounds unreal.'

Wilson apparently thinks that if a worker can speak grammatically, or do a skilled job, he is no longer a worker.

(...)

Earlier in the same series, Wilson actually committed himself to the following remarks:

'Quite honestly, I've never read *Das Kapital*. I got only as far as page two—that's where the footnote is nearly a

page long, I felt that two sentences of main text and a page of footnote were too much.'

This is despite his own claim that 'economics became his field.'



Mr. Wilson was

apparently in such a haze that he could not distinguish page two from page fifty-two, or the beginning of a chapter from the end of it. The first footnotes in *Das Kapital* which might reduce the main text to this extent are the ones that concern Ricardo, at the end of chapter one, on commodities. In the edition nearest to hand (William Glaisher, London, 1909) these footnotes begin at page fifty-two. In no conceivable edition could they come on page two.

But what a pity that Wilson was not able to overcome the tremendous hurdle presented to his comprehension by some rather long footnotes (he was, after all, only an Oxford lecturer on economics). He might have learned that there is more to a man's position in society than the colour of the coat he wears. He might even have learned that there are two classes in society—an owning class and a working class. One feels that he might not have survived the shock.

(From 'The Passing Show' by Alwyn Edgar, *Socialist Standard*, August 1963)

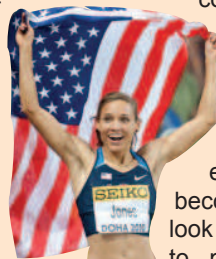
# ACTION REPLAY

## Entering the Straight

LOLO JONES (pictured) stirred things up a month or two ago. She revealed that seven months as a top US bobsleigh competitor had earned her just over \$740.

This annoyed quite a lot of people, mostly other bobsledders (to use the American term for the sport and its athletes). This was far more than most of them earned, they pointed out. Jones' statement that 'I'm going to be a little late on my rent' was seen as particularly offensive, since she is also an international hurdler who receives a lot of money in sponsorships, from Red Bull, for instance. In addition, she's a devout christian, but that doesn't stop her from trading on her good looks for endorsements and pin-up photos.

Behind all this froth are some real issues about how people get to be top athletes and how much financial sacrifice is needed for this. American sportspeople do not receive central government funding, so would-be stars often have to



rely on that favourite source of support, their parents. There are stories of people losing their homes or going bankrupt because they tried to pay for their kids' training. Just as having unpaid interns in large companies more or less limits such posts to offspring of the rich, so something similar might be said of young athletes.

The body UK Sport has a World Class Performance Programme that provides coaches and scientific support, as well as personal awards that contribute to athletes' living costs; it is backed by the government and the National Lottery. But 'with a shifting economic environment, it has become increasingly necessary to look towards the commercial sector to provide an additional income stream' ([www.uksport.gov.uk](http://www.uksport.gov.uk)).

Andy Murray, the new national hero, benefited from his mum being a professional tennis coach. Then in 2006 the Lawn Tennis Association paid Brad Gilbert half a million quid to coach him. So there's plenty of funding for some.

It also helps to be in a high-profile sport, rather than one such as bobsleigh or judo, say. Or an unsuccessful one, with sports such as volleyball losing funding after a poor display in last year's Olympics. To them that hath shall be given ... **PB**

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# Voice from the Back

## Political Posturing

Politicians love making grandiose claims that have nothing to do with reality and the president of the USA came up with a wild notion recently. 'President Obama used the backdrop of the Brandenburg Gate yesterday to urge Russia to leave the Cold War behind by agreeing to a one-third reduction in its nuclear arsenal' (*Times*, 20 June). The USA has 7,700 nuclear warheads and Russia has 8,500, so a one-third reduction would still leave enough nuclear warheads to burn the world to a crisp. Do you still listen to politicians' ideas or give them any credence?



US nuclear warhead

## A Bleak Future

The following grim findings emerged from a poll carried out for the Association of British Insurers. YouGov asked 2,506 employees questions relating to retirement and welfare. 'One in five working people believe that they will never retire. According to a survey being published today, of those who believe they will stop working full-time, more than four out of ten reckon they will have to keep a part-time job. Two thirds of those polled said they would struggle to meet the cost of paying for long-term care as they became infirm' (*Times*, 9 July). Having suffered a lifetime of exploitation workers cannot even see some relief in old age.

## Child Labour

In the industrial revolution British capitalism made its fortune on the exploitation of child labour, but the advent of the trade union movement,



Child worker, Vietnam

after a long hard struggle, saw that exploitation ended. Ever ready to make profits the British capitalist class have shifted their source of child exploitation to Asia. The British sugar giant Tate & Lyle has imported large volumes of sugar from Cambodia through a supplier that is accused of using child labour. 'Tate & Lyle - which is the EU's largest cane producer and whose ingredients are used in a wide range of foods around the world - has used the Thai KSL group since 2011 for its supplies from Cambodia.

However KSL is alleged to have been complicit along with the Cambodian government, in the eviction of people from the land, arson and theft. .... Children as young as nine years of age work on Cambodian plantations run by KSL.' (*Guardian*, 9 July)

## The Uncaring Society

Carers are being forced to cut back on essentials such as food and electricity because of the so-called bedroom tax. 'Despite Government promises to protect them from the under-occupancy charge, one in six carers forced to pay it are falling behind on their rent and face eviction, research by Carer UK shows. .... Ministers pledged £25m in discretionary payments to protect carers

and disabled people when the policy was introduced in April, but campaigners warned it would be only enough to support around 40,000 of the 420,000 disabled people affected by the cuts' (*Independent*, 9 July). Just one in ten cases are receiving these discretionary payments on an ongoing basis, this latest research shows. When it comes

to cutting welfare payments capitalism is ruthless even if you are disabled.

## A Society Of Debtors

Politicians love to paint a picture of steadily improving living standards, but it is a complete illusion as a recent newspaper article by Christian Guy, Director of the Centre for Social Justice has revealed. 'Yesterday's grim figures revealed that more than 800,000 households will soon spend more than half their income on debt repayments. We already know that 274 people are declared insolvent or bankrupt every day, 88 properties are repossessed and average household debt, including mortgages, is almost £55,000' (*Times*, 12 July). Hardly 'steadily improving living standards' is it?



Asbest, Russia

## A Grim Choice

In the city of Asbest in Russia workers face a grim choice - work to produce asbestos, which will probably kill you or else move somewhere else. Valentin K. Zemskov, who worked in the asbestos factory and developed asbestosis, a respiratory illness caused by breathing in asbestos fibres summed up the position of workers in Asbest. 'Still he said the city had no other choice. 'If we didn't have the factory, how could we live?' he said gasping for air as he talked in the yard of a retirement home. 'We need to keep it open so we have jobs' (*New York Times*, 13 July). Inside a socialist society no one would have to endure such a hellish dilemma.

## FREE LUNCH

